

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus, comprising:

an image forming device that forms an image on a sheet by ejecting ink;
a sheet feed table that is disposed to face an ink ejection direction of the image forming device and has a surface region at an upper side thereof for supporting the sheet;
a sheet feeding mechanism that feeds the sheet in a sheet feeding direction;
at least one air suctioning portion that is formed on the surface region of the sheet feed table at an upstream or a downstream side of an image forming region, wherein when the image forming device forms the image, the air suctioning portion allows air to be sucked therethrough;

an air suctioning device that sucks air through the air suctioning portion; and
an ink receiver that is formed on the surface region of the sheet feed table and that receives ink ejected from the image forming device, the ink receiver being disposed in a portion of the image forming region, wherein the air suctioning portion includes a downstream air suctioning portion and an upstream air suctioning portion disposed downstream of and upstream of the ink receiver in the sheet feeding direction and both the downstream air suctioning portion and the upstream air suctioning portion have a plurality of openings arranged in a direction perpendicular to the sheet feeding direction.

2. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the ink receiver does not communicate with the air suctioning portion.

3. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the ink receiver includes an ink passage opening that allows ink ejected from the image forming

device to pass therethrough and an ink receiving chamber that receives ink passing through the ink passage opening.

4. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the ink receiving chamber is provided with an ink absorber that absorbs ink.

5. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the image forming device includes a carriage that reciprocates in ~~a~~the direction perpendicular to the sheet feeding direction, and a print head mounted on the carriage, wherein the ink passage opening extends in a carriage moving direction in the image forming region.

6. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the ink passage opening is divided into a plurality of portions in the carriage moving direction.

7. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the ink receiving chamber communicates with all of the plurality of portions of the ink passage opening and is provided with a single ink absorber that absorbs ink passing through the plurality of portions of the ink passage opening.

8. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the sheet feed table has an upper surface that faces the image forming device and a bottom surface that faces the upper surface, the upper surface is formed thereon with a supporter that supports the sheet, and the ink passage opening, and the ink receiving chamber is formed between the upper surface and the bottom surface.

9. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein an air duct that leads air to the air suctioning device through the air suctioning portion is formed between the upper surface and the bottom surface, the air duct is separated from the ink receiving chamber by a wall that connects the upper surface and the bottom surface, and the

ink receiving chamber and the air duct are formed by the upper surface, the bottom surface and the wall.

10. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the air suctioning device is formed at a substantially central portion of the sheet feed table in the direction perpendicular to the sheet feeding direction in order to communicate with the air duct.

11. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the downstream air suctioning portion and the upstream air suctioning portion are the air suctioning portion is disposed downstream of and upstream of the image forming region in the sheet feeding direction, the air duct is disposed upstream of and downstream of the image forming region, the ink receiver is disposed at each end of the sheet feed table in ~~a~~the direction perpendicular to the sheet feeding direction with a substantially central portion in the direction perpendicular to the sheet feeding direction sandwiched between the ink receivers and the upstream and downstream air ducts are connected with each other inside the sheet feed table by a space defined between the ink receiver disposed at the each end.

12. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 9, wherein cross-sectional areas of the upstream and downstream air ducts gradually become larger toward a central portion of the sheet feed table in the direction perpendicular to the sheet feeding direction.

13. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the air suctioning device is activated at least while the image forming device ejects ink into the ink receiver.

14. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein a detector that applies light to the surface region of the sheet feed table and receives the reflected light is disposed on one of the carriage and the image forming device.

15. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein a part of the surface region of the sheet feed table where the light is applied by the detector has a stepped-down portion formed lower than the part of the surface region.

16. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an ink discharge passage through which ink is sucked from the ink receiver.

17. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the sheet feed table is provided on the surface region thereof with a plurality of ribs that extends in the sheet feeding direction, and the ribs divides the ink passage opening into the plurality of the portions in the carriage moving direction.

18. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 17, wherein each of the ribs has a lower end that extends in the ink ejection direction and the lower end enters from the ink passage opening to the ink receiving chamber to contact the ink absorber.

19. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 17, wherein each end of each of the ribs in the sheet feeding direction is disposed across the ink passage opening and the surface region of the sheet feed table is substantially divided into a plurality of areas by the plurality of the ribs.

20. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the air suctioning portion is provided with a suction opening in each of the areas divided by the ribs, on upstream and downstream sides of the image forming region across the image forming region.

21. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a protrusion that extends in the carriage moving direction is disposed on the surface region of the sheet feed table, on upstream and downstream sides of the image forming region across the image forming region, and the ribs are connected at each end thereof in the sheet feeding direction by the protrusion.

22. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to claim 17, wherein at least a pair of ribs is disposed in the surface region of the sheet feed table, a plurality of rollers are disposed along the sheet feeding direction between the pair of the ribs, and each of the rollers is supported to rotate in the sheet feeding direction.

23. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device is controlled to perform a flushing operation at the image forming region.

24. (Currently Amended) A sheet feed table for use in an image forming apparatus including an image forming device, comprising:

an air suctioning portion that allows air to be sucked therethrough and is formed on a surface region of the sheet feed table on at least one of an upstream or a downstream side of an image forming region where the image forming device forms the image, the surface region being disposed to face the image forming device;

an air suctioning device that sucks air through the air suctioning portion; and
an ink receiver that is formed on the surface region of the sheet feed table and that receives ink ejected from the image forming device, the ink receiver being disposed in a portion of the image forming region, wherein the air suctioning portion includes a downstream air suctioning portion and an upstream air suctioning portion disposed downstream of and upstream of the ink receiver in a sheet feeding direction and both the downstream air suctioning portion and the upstream air suctioning portion have a plurality of openings arranged in a direction perpendicular to the sheet feeding direction.

25. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the air suctioning device sucks air to prevent the sheet from turning up.